

The Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.html

Minutes of the June 5, 2003 Meeting

On the call of its sponsor, Rear Admiral Robert F. Duncan, USCG, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, and after public notice in the Federal Register (Notice of meetings, 68 Federal Register 81 page 22408 dated April 28, 2003), the sixty-sixth meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, June 5, 2003. The meeting was held at the Houston Pilots Association, Houston, Texas. The published agenda for the meeting is included as enclosure (1). A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (2). Documents made available to or prepared by the committee are available for public inspection and copying at the office of the Committee's Executive Secretary, CDR Thomas P. Marian, USCG, at U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service Houston/Galveston, 9640 Clinton Drive, Second Floor, Houston, TX 77029. Some of the documents are also available electronically through the Committee's website (www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.html). An audio recording of the meeting was made and is available for copying upon request. Copies of that recording must be requested in writing by June 30, 2005.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Leitzell at 9:05 AM.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Captain Kevin Cook welcomed the committee members and guests and thanked the Houston Pilots Association for hosting the meeting. He thanked everyone for their cooperation in the recent upgrade of security conditions, especially considering that MARSEC requirements are still evolving. He announced that this would be his last meeting as the Executive Director of the Committee. He encouraged the members to be very proud of HOGANSAC's accomplishments. He noted that he has worked with five separate advisory committees, but is especially impressed with the accomplishments of this one. Captain Kaser will be Captain Cook's replacement.

He also announced the arrival of the new Coast Guard District Eight Commander, RADM Robert Duncan. The meeting was scheduled to ensure RADM Duncan could attend. Captain Cook provided RADM Duncan's brief biography.

REMARKS BY COMMITTEE SPONSOR

RADM Duncan began by stating that this meeting, the sixty-sixth meeting of HOGANSAC, was his first. He noted that he hopes to get to know each of the Committee members well. He thanked the Committee for the great BBQ that provided a warm welcome. When all of the Federal Committees were surveyed, HOGANSAC came up at the top of the list. Its focus on safety has been a great success and the participatory approach helps to ensure things are done right.

RADM Duncan acknowledged the significant work of the Port Security subcommittee. He stated that he obtained a better understanding of the vastness of the region during an air over-flight early in the week. He was astounded at the changes in the port and it gave him a better appreciation of everything the port is dealing with. He added that that this Committee seems to have a very solid foundation.

RADM Duncan also stated that he looks forward to working with the Committee members and that they should feel free to visit or call at any time. He ended his remarks by congratulating them on being selected as the USCG Federal Advisory Committee that was recognized for its "best practices" during a recent GAO sponsored survey.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Committee Chairman, Mr. Tim Leitzell, thanked RADM Duncan for his remarks. The Chairman reminded those in attendance that the Committee forms working groups, headed by a volunteer from the Committee, to address specific issues. Working groups then report the results of their progress at Committee meetings.

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

The first award was a Public Service Award presented to Mr. Roger Van Duzer. A copy of the letter is included as enclosure (3).

The second award was a letter of appreciation from various members of the port community to Coast Guard Group Galveston's Aids to Navigation Team for their outstanding work. A copy of the letter is included as enclosure (4).

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 30, 2003 MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes¹.

OLD BUSINESS

Dredging Projects

Larry Miller asked the Chief of the Galveston Operations Division of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to provide an update on dredging projects.

The following information was provided. Mike Hooks, Inc. has begun levy construction in Galveston and will work into June with the dredge work being completed in September.

The Dredge NEWPORT, working in the Entrance Channel, is approximately one-third of the way complete with its work and should be finished by September.

¹ The minutes of the previous meeting, without enclosures, are included as enclosure (5).

The Dredge TOM JAMES has completed its work in Bayport and has moved out to the Houston Ship Channel. The TOM JAMES is working on the beneficial use area of the mid-bay contract (which is 45% complete) and is making good progress. The dredge B E LINDHOLM is on scene in the mid-bay and a second dredge is expected in June. The dredges will keep a 5-mile separation from the TOM JAMES.

The ACOE is looking for a way to reconfigure the Atkinson Island Mooring Basin since the old moorings were removed. The ACOE is hoping to reconfigure the area in 2005, but the science of the project will be much easier than the ability to obtain the funding.

King Fisher Marine is conducting emergency dredging just west of the Beltway 8 Bridge. This dredging is expected to be completed within the next week. There is a proposal on the table for Great Lakes to conduct emergency dredging at Oiltanking.

The Goat Island contract is approximately 25% complete. A dredge for this project is expected to arrive in July.

Mike Morris added that the Houston Pilots are grateful for the ACOE's efforts to facilitate emergency dredging throughout the Houston Ship Channel. He asked about the status of the 5-mile project. Some shoaling has occurred because it is not being used. It is anticipated to be used in 2004 or 2005. The barge lanes are the last major piece of construction in the project. Larry Miller added that the entire project is expected to be completed in mid-October of 2004.

Chuck King emphasized the impact of the late date of the barge lanes. Waiting another year and a half to use the channel does not seem like the right priority to him. Tim Leitzell reminded everyone of how hard the Committee fought to get the barge lanes added into the contract.

Mike Morris stated that the timeline needed to be accelerated. Shoaling already exists on the outer quarter of the new channel. It seems that it would be beneficial to use the channel and help keep it dredged. Tim Lietzell asked Larry Miller to please work with Mike Morris to see what could be done on this issue.

Captain Cook noted that Dragos Rauta would be speaking about mooring facility depths later in the meeting.

Dan Wyatt discussed the Dredging Safety Conference that was held in May. There were about 40 people present, consisting of primarily dredging contractors. Presentations were made by Marine Safety Unit Galveston, ACOE headquarters, and OSHA. He added that the next meeting would be in September. Larry Miller added that dredging information could be obtained from the District ACOE website at swg.usace.army.mil.

CDR Marian noted that there will be a meeting on June 11th at 1:00 pm to go over dredging issues with the dredge MERIDIAN, working at Lights 111 and 113. In the past, closures have coincided with other scheduled channel closures and this meeting is to help everyone know what to expect as operations progress.

ATON Knockdown Working Group

CDR Marian began by stating that the number of self-reported Aids to Navigation knockdowns has dropped significantly. The reporting rate was 21% in January, 27% in April and March, and only one letter was sent out in May. This reflected a reporting rate of about 22% so far this year, down from last year's average of 50%. The subcommittee is trying to reinvigorate the process. Raymond Butler added that the next GICA newsletter will contain information on this subject.

CWO Tom Horan addressed pending AtoN projects. He noted that the funding has been approved for Alpha Ranges on the ship channel, a \$1.25 million project. This should be completed by next spring.

The Bolivar Alternate Route will have three additional aids placed on station over the summer to help mark the route. CDR Marian added that VTS has been tracking the use of this new route.

Mooring Subcommittee Report

David Foret noted that the subcommittee met on May 19th and picked up where it had left off. He added that there seems to be a good cross-section of industry representatives on the subcommittee. The Bolivar Roads area is an area of concern with regard to bunkering. The subcommittee has also notified two facilities of mooring concerns. The next meeting of the subcommittee will be on August 4th at the Houston Pilots Office.

Bolivar Roads Anchorage Area

CDR Marian stated the Final Rule establishing Anchorage "C" was published on May 13th. This is effective as of June 12th, 2003. He thanked the Pilots and others who have assisted in the coordination. He feels this will help to relieve anchorage congestion.

Recreational Boating Education Initiative

Ellyn Roof stated that the Houston Safe Boating Counsel acquired PFD's to be put on boat ramps as loaners. The Galveston Sheriff is helping in the distribution of the "Sharing Our Bay" pamphlet. The Safe Boating Counsel is also sponsoring the Water Activity Day Events for Children, which finishes with a certification program. The organization is trying to solve liability insurance problems.

Dan Wyatt provides educational articles for Telltales magazine every month. Chief Pojar also contributed an article this month.

Dan Wyatt noted that a portion of the mid-bay is shoaling. The traditional crossing at LT 68 is jeopardized by dredging activities and boaters are encouraged to use the lighted crossing at LT 61.

Port Security Subcommittee Report

Raymond Butler stated that since the last HOGANSAC meeting, the subcommittee has implemented interim MARSEC II measures, which went very well. A drill was held at the Adams Mark Hotel on April 16th where several threat scenarios were played out at once. The group learned that it is very important to continue to drill and to run through the process. The need for communication was also highlighted.

CDR Thomas is leading the subcommittee through Initial Security Actions. Mr. Butler thanked the Coast Guard for allowing members of industry to be a part of the process of creating the procedures. These security actions are intended to be the first step to take in a highly critical situation, leading into what to do in MARSEC II and what the impacts will be.

The subcommittee also identified the need for a Port Communications System for security issues. This new system is funded by friends of the port community. Laura Gissen inquired if the Texas City system could tie into the new communications system. Mr. Butler stated that yes, Texas City and other ports, such as Freeport and Corpus Christi, will be able to use the system. Members of the subcommittee are working out the details.

Mr. Butler educated the Committee on an incident that had occurred at the Fred Hartman Bridge. A towboat had noticed something suspicious and reported it. The system worked well. The suspicious package turned out to be a cat in a box that had been "buried at sea".

The subcommittee will continue to meet the last Thursday of every month at 0930.

Captain Cook noted that the interim final rule would be out at the end of this month. He added that the work done here has been closely tied to the emerging regulations. The subcommittee is trying to stay ahead of the curve and look at the rules as they are published.

RADM Duncan added that there is a sense of urgency as the second anniversary of September 11th approaches. We need to make sure the whole system comes together seamlessly with minimal impact. The NVICs were published last summer and the port community's input was seriously considered. They are trying to put equivalencies in the process to make allowances for similar measures in different areas. The best process though is to mirror what is already working well. Everyone needs to stay focused. The cat in the box is a perfect example. The Committee's input into this process is essential to doing it right.

Dragos Rauta provided the tanker owner's point of view. He noted that traffic flows without much of a problem. His side of the industry looks forward to seeing what the rule provides and noted that they have seen how measures take a toll on limited Coast Guard resources. Some tankers have had to wait for days for inspections. Tim Leitzell said that everyone is very aware and that safety and security go hand in hand.

Bridge Allision Working Group

CDR Marian stated that in December of 2000, an inbound Rickmers Line vessel's cargo gear went through the 610 Bridge. After costly repairs the same line hit the bridge again four months later. This time the damage totaled \$1.5 million. The working group has been working to obtain a laser sensor height detection system, the cost of which is \$85,000. So far the Port of Houston Authority, Buffalo Marine, Bay of Houston Towing, and others have contributed, but there is still a \$41,000 shortfall.

Chuck King added that even though a company may not move above the bridge, the traffic that does move up there may affect their business. He asked everyone to think about how it could affect them and to consider giving a pledge. Tim Leitzell added that this is a port community. While the project may not directly affect a certain company, it will affect other players in the community.

Larry Miller thanked LCDR Teschendorf for his help with this project.

Swimmers Near Lynchburg

Rebecca Caplan stated that there has not been much change on this issue since the January meeting. Ownership of the property is currently spread among several government agencies. If one of them were to put up a fence, they would assume liability. The video shown at the previous meeting will be sent to government agencies soon with a letter drafted by the Houston Pilots.

Captain Cook explained the issue, stating that when a big ship goes by, there is high suction and high surge. There is no way around the issue but we can continue to educate.

Electronic Navigation

Captain Morris stated that 45 Houston Pilots are trained and carrying electronic navigation units. The Pilots Association owns 25 units and hopes to have 50 units by the fall. They are working with the manufacturer to make the units AIS capable. Tim Leitzell asked if the Galveston/Texas City Pilots were working with the Houston Pilots on this. Mike Morris stated that he hadn't seen much interest from them. Tim Leitzell stated that he would like to see a Galveston/Texas City Pilots representative back working with the Committee.

Dragos Rauta added that forthcoming rules will ask ships to carry AIS. He inquired why pilots would use AIS. Mike Morris offered to fill him in at the break. CDR Marian added that this project is still very much in the developmental stages and that VTS should be AIS capable by the end of the year.

Safe Haven Working Group

Jann Sandwick provided a copy of meeting minutes to Committee members. A copy of those minutes is included as enclosure (6). Ms. Sandwick began by asking anyone with an idea for a safe haven to please let her know. She noted that the pilots have very valuable information when dealing with the issue of currents. The Coast Guard has asked local dredges to provide foul weather plans. Tim Leitzell added that a study through the ACOE is looking at Atkinson Island and Cedar Bayou as possible safe haven solutions.

San Jacinto High Water Action Plan

CDR Marian stated that a protocol has been submitted to the COTP. The protocol is a comprehensive effort to walk all of the players through the required steps in the event of high water. This includes a meter to identify warning levels. A new current meter is expected to be installed at the I-10 Bridge on the San Jacinto River soon. CDR Marian added that he appreciates everyone's involvement in the project.

NEW BUSINESS

Hurricane Presentation

LT George Tobey made a PowerPoint presentation about hurricane season. A copy of this presentation is included as enclosure (7). He noted that a Port Emergency Meeting is scheduled for June 16th to discuss some of the issues in more detail. Raymond Butler noted that post-hurricane actions are just as important as the preparations. He thanked the Coast Guard for using industry to help create a plan for the port.

Captain Cook stated that the hurricane user guide for the port is located on the MSO Houston website (www.uscg.mil/d8/mso/hougal). This user guide helps to define what procedures members of the port should take at each level.

NOAA Navigational Service Update

Alan Bunn stated that NOAA has a new response team that uses a 28-foot vessel. This vessel is able to work on the areas outside of the channels and is available to assist with emergency surveys and post-hurricane actions. They are currently trying to adapt the equipment so they can work even closer with the Coast Guard and eventually be flown in a C-130 to the necessary site.

Mr. Bunn stated that a new Coast Pilot 5 was in the works. This has been identified as a high priority Coast Pilot and it will be updated annually. He stated that they need to know of discrepancies, security zones, new landmarks, etc. He asked that anyone with changes please contact him. The input for the draft is due in mid-July. Safe haven information would be helpful too.

He also stated that free updates to electronic charts could be obtained from www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov.

Raymond Butler noted that Louisiana was shut down for days after a storm passed through and that this unit provided great assistance.

Under Keel Clearance

Dragos Rauta of INTERTANKO provided a PowerPoint presentation on under keel clearance issues. A copy of his presentation is included as enclosure (8) and a copy of his paper is included as enclosure (9).

Tim Leitzell noted that this issue was addressed by the Committee approximately two years ago, which resulted in the Facility Depth Mooring Guide.

Mike Morris stated that we are blessed with mud in this port. Many ships come up the 40-foot channel with 40 feet of draft even though there are requirements for a greater clearance beneath vessels at certain berths.

Tim Leitzell added that it would be helpful to get the Facility Mooring Depth Guide on-line so that it would be very easier to update.

Texas A&M University OSHA Southwest Training Institute

Tandy Ritter stated that she is looking to develop a "train the trainer" course for the maritime industry. She asked for the help of Committee members and other experts in attendance. This class would go to OSHA institutions nation-wide. She inquired if it would be possible to have a HOGANSAC working group to serve as advisors for the class development.

Tim Leitzell inquired as to where the dividing line was between OSHA and the Coast Guard as it relates to maritime industry. He also asked who the focus group for the class would be. He stated that the Committee will continue to work with Dan Wyatt to get information to them.

CDR Marian stated that the Education Subcommittee is expanding and could include this issue as well as recreational boater education issues.

Texas State Pilots Association Resolution

Mike Morris deferred presentation of this topic until the next meeting.

Other Issues

James Jackson inquired about rumors of a bridge that would be built to connect Bolivar to Pelican Island. CDR Marian stated that no permits have been requested or issued for such a project. Mr. Jackson stated that Texas Department of Transportation conducted a study on the building of the bridge. He had also heard that the Harris County Toll Road Authority was interested in funding the project. CDR Marian stated that there would have to be further environmental studies and time for input if anything was going to be built. At this point, he has not heard anything from Coast Guard District Eight.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the full Committee will be held at the Houston Yacht Club on Thursday, October 9, 2003. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

The Committee's working groups meeting will be held at the Port of Texas City on Thursday, September 25, 2003. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 PM.

CAPT KEVIN S. COOK
Executive Director

Certified: TIMOTHY R. LEITZELL
Committee Chair

Enclosures: (1) Published Agenda
(2) List of Members and Public in Attendance
(3) Public Service Award for Mr. Roger Van Duzer
(4) Letter for the Aids to Navigation Team
(5) Minutes of January 30, 2003 HOGANSAC Meeting
(6) Safe Haven Working Group Meeting Minutes
(7) Hurricane PowerPoint Presentation
(8) Under Keel Clearance PowerPoint Presentation
(9) Under Keel Clearance Paper